

National Health Service Corps

Program Objective:

The National Health Service Corps purpose is to assist States in addressing the health professional shortages that may cause disparities in access to health care. The National Health Service Corps assists in the development, recruitment and retention of health care professionals dedicated to serving communities that lack adequate access to primary healthcare.

Short Description and Background:

The National Health Service Corps was created in 1970 under Section 3381 of the United States Public Health Services Act to assist States in the recruitment and retention of health care professionals dedicated to serving communities that lack adequate access to primary health care. Emphasizing the interdisciplinary approach, National Health Service Corps primary care health professionals represent many disciplines, including certified nurse midwives, certified registered nurse anaesthetists, clinical psychologists, clinical social workers, dental hygienists, dentists, licensed professional counselors, marriage and family therapists, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, physicians (primary care), and psychiatric nurse specialists. Health professionals retained through this program must complete a minimum two year service obligation.

Program Activities and Accomplishments:

Since 1995 the Office of Primary Care and Rural Health, Utah Department of Health, has assisted in the placement of 112 health care professionals. Eighty-three (83) of the 112 health care professionals have been placed in rural Utah communities, and 29 have been placed in urban Utah communities. Locations for placements must be in federally designated Health Professional Shortage Areas serving medically underserved populations, with the hopes that they will remain and continue to serve medically underserved populations in Utah communities upon completion of their obligation.

Fiscal Implications:

Primary care services can best prevent illness, or detect and treat it early, when visits occur regularly over time. There are no fiscal implications for the National Health Service Corps Program, as program activities are funded through the federal Health Resources and Services Administration. The National Health Service Corps Program would impact Utah's rural and medically underserved areas that have a hard time recruiting and retaining health care professionals

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